

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 GSA-02 AGRE-00 CEA-01
CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-01 INR-07 INT-05
L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 CTME-00 AID-05
SS-15 STR-05 ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5768

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, XL

SUBJECT: CARIBBEAN TASK FORCE - TRADE ISSUES

REF: STATE 265255

1. AS REQUESTED PARA. 7 REFTTEL, EMBOFF DISCUSSED WITH CARICOM OFFICIALS OSBORNE NURSE, DIRECTOR OF SECTORIAL POLICY AND PLANNING, AND JASPER SCOTLAND, DIRECTOR OF TRADE POLICY AND STATISTICS, MTN OBJECTIVES AND SCHEDULE FOR SUBMISSION OF REQUESTS AND OFFERS, AS OUTLINED IN PARA. 6 OF REFTTEL, AS WELL AS USG WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE WITH CARICOM AS A SINGLE ENTITY. WHILE EXPRESSING INTEREST IN THE USG PROPOSAL, THESE OFFICIALS EXPLAINED THAT COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WOULD HAVE TO INITIATE ACTION BEFORE MEMBER GOVERNMENTS COULD AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARIAT OR A SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO ACT IN REPRESENTATION OF CARICOM IN THE MTN. NURSE EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT THE GOTT AND GOJ WERE "CARRYING" CARICOM CONCERNS WITH THEM DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS. BUT CONCEDED THAT IDEA OF CARICOM INVOLVEMENT HAD MERIT AND WOULD BE RAISED WITH TYNDALL, ACTING SECRETARY, FOR POSSIBLE INCLUSION IN THE AGENDA OF A FUTURE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL.

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2. REACTION OF AMBASSADOR DYETT, SENIOR GOG FOREIGN MINISTRY ECONOMIC OFFICIAL, TO USG PROPOSAL WAS GENERALLY FAVORABLE, BUT HE SEEMED INCLINED TO LEAVE ANY INITIATIVE TO CARICOM SECRETARIAT. WHILE RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MTN TO THE LDC'S IN GENERAL, FORMIN OFFICIALS APPEAR TO VIEW THESE NEGOTIATIONS

AS ONLY MARGINAL TO GOG TRADE INTERESTS, WHICH ARE LARGELY FOCUSED ON SUGAR, BAUXITE AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, CARICOM ARRANGEMENTS. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT COMMON FUND NEGOTIATIONS ARE OF MUCH GREATER CONCERN TO THESE OFFICIALS, WHO EXPRESSED REGRET THAT THE GOG HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CONFERENCE NOW IN PROGRESS.

3. REGARDING TASK FORCE STUDY ON US TRADE BARRIERS TO CARIBBEAN PRODUCTS, WE FEEL THAT LIST OF ITEMS NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION IS COMPLETE AND ADEUATELY REFLECTS GOG CONCERNS. RESTRICTIONS ON RUM ARE OF PARTICULAR INTEREST. AN INVESTIGATION OF SEVERAL PRODUCTS, INCLUDING TIMBER AND FINISHED WOOD PRODUCTS, WHICH WE BELIEVED WOULD BE LIKELY CANDIDATES FOR CONSIDERATION, REVEALED THAT SUPPLY PROBLEMS, RATHER THAN TRADE BARRIERS, ARE THE LIMITING FACTORS IN GAINING ACCESS TO THE US MARKET. ONLY POSSIBLE EXCEPTION, WHER TRADE BARRIERS WERE DECISIVE, IS A RECENT CASE WHICH INVOLVED A PROPOSED SHIPMENT OF PORK TO PUERTO RICO. IN THAT CASE, HOWEVER, MEAT INSPECTION STANDARDS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN THE IMPEDIMENT.

4. COMMENT. CARICOM SECRETARIAT APPEARS TO BE A CUMBERSOME VEHICLE TO USE IN PROMOTING A CONCERTED EFFORT BY MEMBER STATES IN THE MTN. STAFF RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ARE LACKING. FURTHERMORE, AS NOW CONSTITUTED, THE SECRETARIAT IS BASICALLY AN ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION WITH LITTLE OR NO POLITICAL "CLOUT" IN THE TRADE POLICY AREA.
BURKE

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